

Work Task C1:	Vegetation Type Mapping & Backwater Evaluation
Point of Contact:	John Swett, LC-2320 (702) 293-8574
Purpose:	Document the system status of riparian and marsh communities at LCR MSCP initiation. Develop criteria for classifying backwaters for fish and wildlife habitat values. Periodic vegetation type mapping is a crucial tool which is used to monitor and evaluate the condition of the lower Colorado River (LCR) habitats.
Conservation Measure:	MRM2
Long-term Goal:	In FY05, BIO-WEST will complete the aerial image processing, type map the vegetation within the LCR MSCP project boundaries, and develop criteria to rate backwaters for fish and wildlife habitat value. Periodic updates of the vegetation type maps will be conducted under the system monitoring requirement of the LCR MSCP Habitat Conservation Plan.
FY04 Obligation:	\$400,000 was obligated to BIO-WEST, Inc. in FY04.
FY04 Accomplishment:	Reclamation entered into a contract with BIO-WEST to acquire digital aerial photography and initiate triangulation/orthorectification, and color balancing/image mosaicing of the lower Colorado River.
Project Description:	<p>Riparian and marsh vegetation has been characterized using a classification scheme initially designed by Anderson and Ohmart in 1976. Periodic updates have been conducted along the LCR to help monitor changes in the riparian ecosystem. The most recent type maps were derived by using imagery acquired in 1997. These acre figures were used throughout the LCR MSCP planning process. This project will provide system status at the initiation of LCR MSCP implementation. Periodic updates will be conducted over the course of the LCR MSCP to help monitor the system status. While this information may be occasionally accessed by other parties, its primary purpose is for MSCP system monitoring.</p> <p>In the mid-1980's, BIO-WEST conducted a study for Reclamation on the backwaters along the LCR between Davis Dam and the Southerly International Boundary. Existing backwaters were mapped and a model was developed to classify general wildlife and fish habitat values for these backwaters. These maps were updated in 2000. The mapping and classification system</p>

developed during these studies have allowed Reclamation to determine the extent of backwaters, to assess existing backwaters for habitat value, and to determine factors necessary when constructing backwaters for fish and wildlife. This project will update the backwater maps and further refine rating criteria for fish and wildlife values of backwater habitat, especially for LCR MSCP covered species. These data and models will be used to prioritize backwater restoration projects.